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OUR FOREIGN FIELDS

INDIA

BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF
THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

NOVEMBER, 1911

POOR AND NEEDY MILLIONS

The empire of India is less than half as large as the United States if we include Alaska and Hawaii, and only a little more than half the size of Australia. But there are more people in India than in the whole of the Western hemisphere, plus Africa and all the islands of the globe, or more than three times the population of the United States.

Only ten and seven tenths per cent of the people of the United States at least ten years of age were illiterate in 1900. But in India over ninety per cent of the male population could not read or write, and of the women not one in every hundred can read or write.

The poverty of the people of India is proverbial. A day laborer receives less than ten cents a day when he can get work. The average income of the people amounts to less than three cents a day per capita, for although men, women, and children all work together in the fields, less than one half of the people have work, the remainder being entirely dependent.

Caste, a social system born of race prejudice and fostered by Hinduism, is the greatest hindrance to the progress of Christianity in India. It prevents all social progress and thwarts all efforts at social reform. It is almost impossible for a member of any caste to rise above the dead level of the other members of his caste. This renders wholesome conditions impossible in business, political, social, or religious life. Under the caste system one fifth of the Hindu population is made up of out-castes who are virtually condemned to a life of misery and degradation.

THE RELIGIONS OF THE LAND

If the population of India were to pass before you in review there would pass with every baptized Christian 207 Hindus, 62 Mohammedans, 9 Buddhists, and 8 worshipers of spirits or demons. According to the latest statistics of mission boards there are fewer than one million of baptized Christians among the multitudes of India.

More than 200,000,000 of India's people, or two out of three, are held in the bonds of Hinduism, that reservoir into which have run all the false religious ideas which have entered the mind of man. Its followers are said to be worshipping blindly 330,000,000 gods and goddesses, or more than the total number of human beings in the empire. Not one of these deities possesses such an attribute as love or mercy, and many of them are represented by grotesquely hideous and loathsome images. The worship of Hindu gods at some shrines is indescribably obscene and horrible. The immorality connected with this religion has poisoned the life of the people. Deceit and dishonesty are common because Hinduism supplies no moral motive or power.

There are more Mohammedans in India than in any other country of the world, one fifth of the population being votaries of that religion. In almost every sacred city of Hinduism may be seen the mosques of Islam, whose low standards of purity have swept over India and doomed one third of the women to prison-like seclusion. Mohammedanism is gaining many converts every year from among the depressed classes.

INDIAN METHODISM

There are more members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in India than in all the rest of the world, outside of the United States and Protestant Europe. No other denomination, except the Church of England, reports so many baptized Indian Christians. Of the nearly 1,000,000 baptized Christians indicated by the latest statistics about one fifth are reported by the Methodist Episcopal Church. It is said that 185 different languages and dialects are spoken by the various races and tribes in India, at least 35 of which are used by Methodist Episcopal preachers in their work.

The five Conferences and two Mission Conferences in India reported in 1910, 117 men and 224 women missionaries, 240 ordained and 1,569 unordained Indian preachers, besides 3,724 other Indian workers. There were 148,598 church members, who contributed over \$100,000 for Christian work in the year. The 3,715 Sabbath schools had 165,019 students, and 46,201 were studying in the 1,571 educational institutions of various grades.

Every type of missionary work is illustrated in Indian Methodism. Methodist missionaries are conducting churches for English-speaking people besides the many for the dark-skinned people of the land. The education of the people is forwarded by an extensive school system, comprising all grades of instruction from the kindergarten to the large colleges at Lucknow and the theological seminaries at Bareilly and Baroda. There are Methodist hospitals in several parts of the country. Many of India's boys and girls are fitted for useful lives in Methodist industrial schools. Three great Methodist Publishing Houses issue millions of pages of Christian literature annually.

THE APPEAL OF NECESSITY

There is a district in one of the India Conferences embracing a territory of about 60,000 square miles (equal to the area of Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont) and a population of about 3,750,000. In this district we have two Methodist missionaries and their wives, in two towns 175 miles apart, three women of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, and about a hundred recently converted native workers.

Bishop Warne says: "You could travel a hundred miles in the Punjab, where towns are close together, where there is not a living soul preaching the gospel. In Rajputana there are some states of a million of people in which there is not a Christian worker."

A district superintendent in South India, who had been in charge of two districts, writes that having been relieved of one of these districts he then had only 7,000 square miles and 1,500,000 people in his territory.

In the last four years more than 1,200 baptized Christians of a Conference district in the northern part of India have been transferred to other missions because our own mission could not provide workers to care for them.

A preacher in Northwest India Conference said to a district superintendent: "Give me a dozen more workers and we will have a thousand baptisms in the course of a week and be able to care for them also." Another said: "Give me but three more workers to teach the people and in the course of two months there will be one thousand baptisms from the Chamar caste."

The Bareilly Theological Seminary is attempting to meet the needs of the whole Hindustani speaking field, representing a population of about 100,000,000, but at the present time the

North India and Northwest India Conferences alone could profitably use more new preachers than are now studying in the seminary.

During part of July and August, 1910, the headmaster of Reid Christian College, Lucknow, was compelled to turn away four or five prospective students daily for lack of accommodations.

One of the leading industrial schools in India is seriously hampered by debt and its manager writes that for lack of funds he must each week turn away numbers of boys seeking admission.

PROFITABLE INVESTMENTS

- \$20 will support an orphan for a year.
- \$20 will support a child in a boarding school for a year.
- \$25 will enable a preparatory student to remain in a school one year.
- \$30 to \$50 will enable a college student to remain in college one year.
- \$40 will support a pastor-teacher for a year.
- \$50 to \$100 will pay the salary of a native pastor for a year.
- \$50 will build a rural chapel.
- \$200 will build a village church.
- \$500 will build a church school.
- \$1,000 will build a church in a town.

Larger sums are needed for larger and more permanent buildings.

Send the money to the Missionary Secretaries,
150 Fifth Avenue, New York City.